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Department of Water Resources
Eastern Region

WATER DISTRICT 34
P.O. BOX 53
MACKAY, IDAHO 83251

February 10, 2012


Gary Spackman
322 Front Street
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Mr. Spackman:

The following pages contain the annual report of the distribution of water for the Big Lost River, From November 1, 2010 to October 31, 2011

The Authority to distribute water using water rights in the Basin 34 Directors Report was provided by the Memorandum decision and order granting the Department of Water Resources' motion for interim Administration with Limitation, or decrees issued by the SRBA court.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Totten", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Roger Totten
Watermaster
District #34-Big Lost River

WATER DISTRICT 34
P.O. Box 53 Mackay, Idaho 83251
Phone (208) 588-3137

2011 Annual Report Summary

The Big Lost River Valley started the 2011 water year with an above average snow pack so everyone was expecting an excessive amount of runoff resulting in floods.

Flooding usually occurred in the past before the drought, if the snowpack was above 125% of normal coupled with a normal spring. Since the reservoir was 87% full by April 1st and the looming possibilities of serious floods, the Big Lost River Irrigation Board and Water District #34 agreed to release the water from the reservoir thus alleviating the severity of flooding while at the same time, recharging the aquifer.

Recharge continued through the start of irrigation season, and on May 1st the reservoir was at 70.58% of capacity. With the exception of May 1st-May 3rd all rights remained on for the remainder of May 2011. On May 15th the river had connected, all though the irrigation season started with cool weather the use of water increased so that by May 17th the use of water for recharge was stopped. I subsequently toured the high country including the Big Lost-Wood divide where I discovered that because of the cool weather the snow below 8000 feet had sank with little runoff. In fact the roads in Copper Basin were dry and dusty. Because of these facts the irrigation district decided to start storing water again since the reservoir was now down to 54.05% of capacity.

While the spring temperatures were high enough to connect the river by mid May 2011 they remained cool through the middle of June 2011. So on June 1st / 6-1-1920 rights were on until June 8th when all rights went back on and all rights remained on until July 21st. On July 29th the river was disconnected and 3-27-1896 rights were on.

Recharge had returned on June 23rd and remained on until July 13th. The reservoir filled and by June 27th water was going over the spillway and continued over the spillway until July 15th.

Because of the cool spring first cut hay crops were about 15% below the normal yield, since the first cutting was later than normal, very few third cuttings were harvested, however second cuttings gave better than normal yields.

August 1st We had rain and hail. The rain continued off and on through the 3rd with between 1.5-2.5 inches of precipitation falling throughout the valley. So as a result of the rain all rights were back up to 5-1-1906 then fell to 10-2-1885 to end the month. September 2011 continued to be warm with the month ending with 5-1-1805 rights on.

When October 2011 arrived so did the rains, between 2 and 3 inches fell throughout the valley, from October 1st to October 3rd. Due to the rain the irrigation season ended with all rights back on.

Because of the low snow sinking this spring in addition to the October rains the small creeks throughout the valley (eg. Pass Creek, Alder Creek, Twin Bridges, Grant, and Lake Creek) are still running, these creeks normally quit running either late summer or early fall, this year they are running into the river which is very unusual.

The Howell Gage is iced up, but normally about 80 CFS flows past the gage, this year there was about 140 CFS in late December 2011, because I chopped the ice away from the staff gage to read the level. Consequently, the inflow to the reservoir is over 150 CFS which is well above normal; as a result the reservoir is currently over 78% and will be full in March 2012. The water level is still increasing in the aquifer for example the static water level in June 2011 was 32 feet by December 2011 it had risen to 26 feet and for the first time in about 30 years there was rising water at the Arco Gage and in the ferris slough this fall. So the water table has improved this year and obviously recharge has contributed to this improvement.

This winter snowpack is currently below 50%, but the forecast still thinks La Nina will bring cooler but wetter weather conditions

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Totten", with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Roger Totten
Water Master
Water District 34